

SC Public Library Staffing & Retirement Survey

The 'graying' of the public library profession in South Carolina will result in many upcoming retirements. It is important that we begin to address the impending loss of both MLS and non-MLS staff members in the field of public librarianship in this state by looking closely at the numbers of those who are planning to retire in 1-2, 3-5, and 6-10 years respectively. Data gathered for this survey was completed in December 2002 with 33 out of 42 public libraries responding.

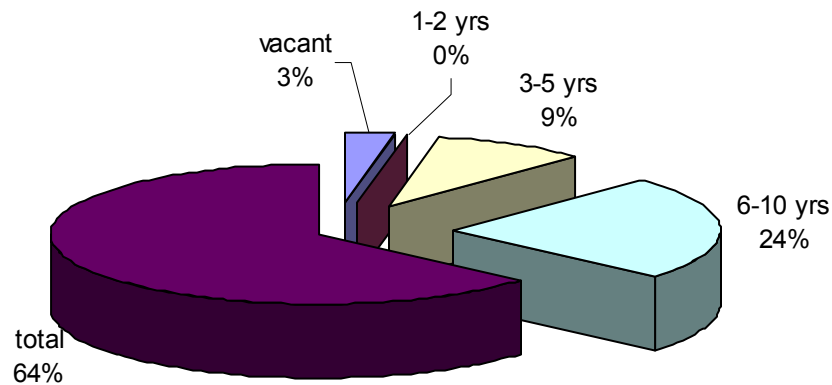
TOTAL N=42

33 responses = 79% response rate

1. **Director** will be retiring within:

1-2 years **0** 3-5 years **6** 6-10 years **16** positions currently vacant **2**

Percent of Retiring SC PL Directors



Approximately thirty-three percent (33%) of Public Library Directors will retire in 3-10 years.

2. **MLS** department directors/program managers/supervisors retiring within:

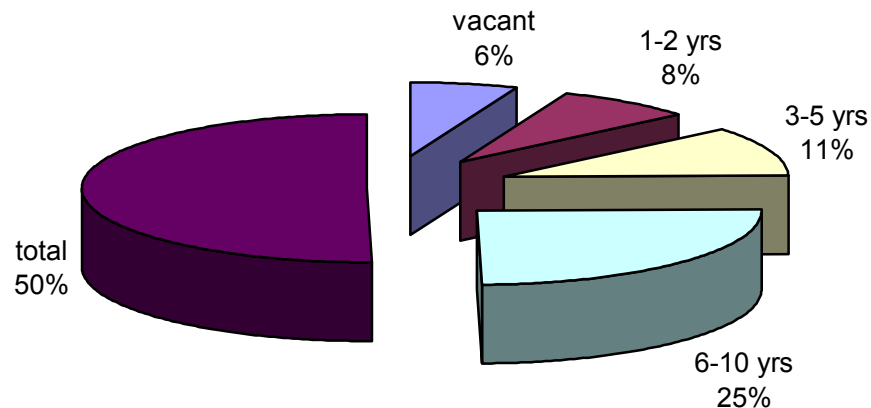
***Department directors/program managers/supervisors** are persons who may often directly report to the director and manage major aspects of library operations and/or persons who may supervise support staff in any part of the library.*

1-2 years **11** 3-5 years **16** 6-10 years **36** position(s) currently vacant **9**

Total ALA-MLS SC Public Library FTE Employees 2001 = 366
(South Carolina State Library Annual Report 2000-2001)

Assumption: one out of 5 FTEs is department directors/program managers/supervisors.
Approximation = $366/5 = 73$

**Percent Retiring *MLS* Dept. Directors/Program Managers/
Supervisors**



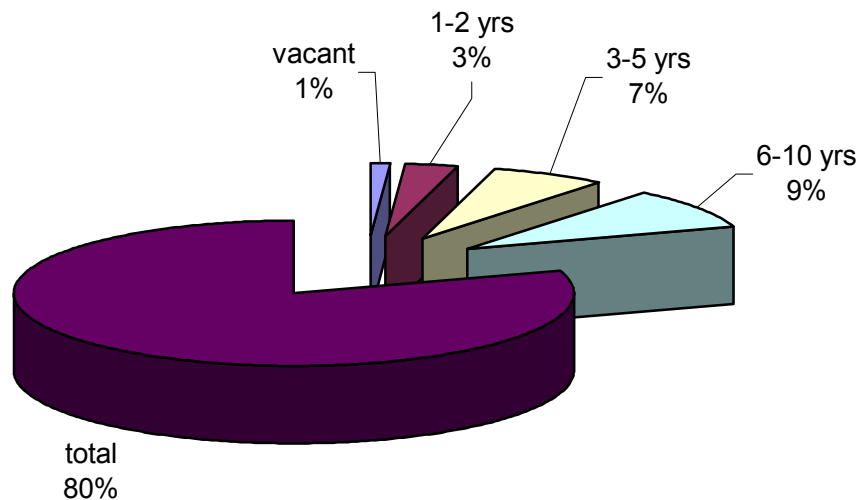
Approximately forty-four percent (44%) of *MLS* Department Directors/Program Managers/Supervisors will retire in the next ten years.

3. **Non-MLS** department directors/program managers/supervisors retiring within:

1-2 years **9** 3-5 years **20** 6-10 years **27** position(s) currently vacant **3**

Total non-MLS SC Public Library FTE Employees 2001 = 1176 (Total 1542-366 [ALA-MLS FTE Staff] =1176. South Carolina State Library Annual Report 2000-2001)
Assumption: one out of 5 FTEs is department directors/program managers/supervisors.
Approximation = $1176/5 = 235$

Percent Retiring *non-MLS* Dept. Directors/Program Managers/Supervisors



Approximately nineteen percent (19%) of non-MLS Department Directors/Program Managers/Supervisors will retire in the next ten years.

4. **MLS** librarians retiring within:

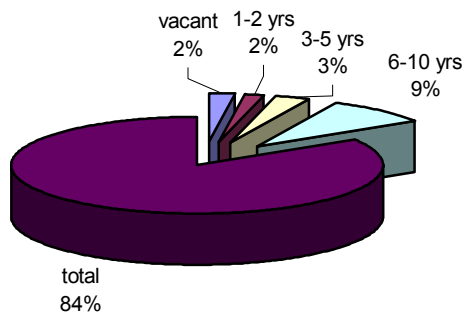
Total ALA-MLS SC Public Library FTE Employees 2001 = 366 (South Carolina State Library Annual Report 2000-2001)

Approximate coverage in SC Public Libraries in 4 categories:

- Public Services 40% (Includes Circulation and Reference) total=146
- Children/Youth Services 30% total=110
- Technical Services 25% (Includes Cataloging/Acquisitions/Preservation) total=92
- Systems/Automation Services 5% (Includes technical support & Web development) total=18

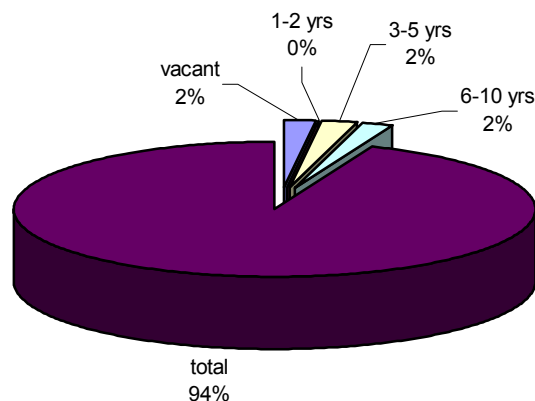
Public services: **3** 1-2 years **5** 3-5 years **16** 6-10 years **4** position(s) currently vacant

Percent Retiring (MLS) in Public Services



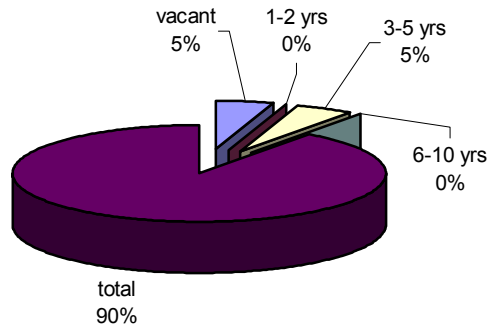
Technical services: **0** 1-2 years **2** 3-5 years **2** 6-10 years **2** position(s) currently vacant

Percent Retiring (MLS) in Technical Services



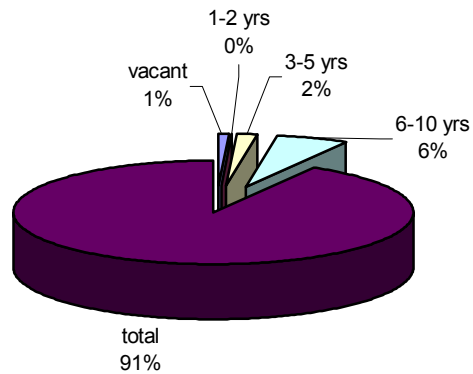
Systems/Automation: **0** 1-2 years **1** 3-5 years **0** 6-10 years **1** position(s) currently vacant

Percent Retiring (MLS) in Systems/Automation



Children/Youth: **0** 1-2 years **2** 3-5 years **7** 6-10 years **1** position(s) currently vacant

Percent Retiring (MLS) in Children/Youth Services



5. How many **non-MLS** staff will be retiring within (please place # in each empty space):

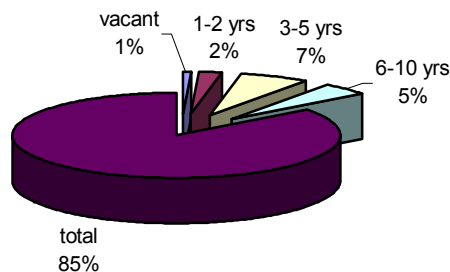
Total non-MLS SC Public Library FTE Employees 2001 = 1176 (South Carolina State Library Annual Report 2000-2001)

Approximate coverage in SC Public Libraries in 4 categories:

- Public Services 40% (Includes Circulation and Reference) total=470
- Children/Youth Services 30% total=353
- Technical Services 25% (Includes Cataloging/Acquisitions/Preservation) total=294
- Systems/Automation Services 5% (Includes technical support & Web development) total=59

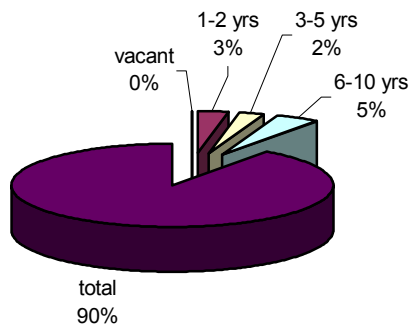
Public services: **13** 1-2 years **38** 3-5 years **27** 6-10 years **4** position(s) currently vacant

Percent of Retiring (non-MLS) in Public Services



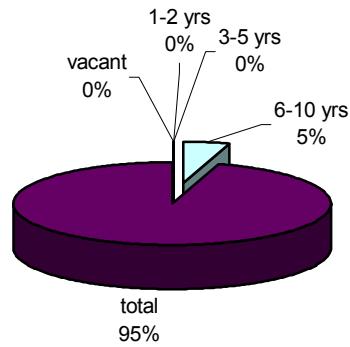
Technical services: **10** 1-2 years **8** 3-5 years **15** 6-10 years **0** position(s) currently vacant

Percent Retiring (non-MLS) in Technical Services



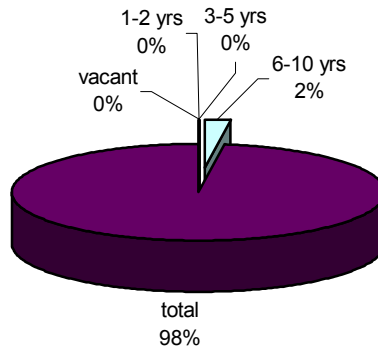
Systems/Automation: **0** 1-2 years **0** 3-5 years **3** 6-10 years **0** position(s) currently vacant

Percent Retiring (non-MLS) in Systems/Automation



Children/Youth: **0** 1-2 years **0** 3-5 years **8** 6-10 years **0** position(s) currently vacant

Percent Retiring (non-MLS) in Children/Youth Services

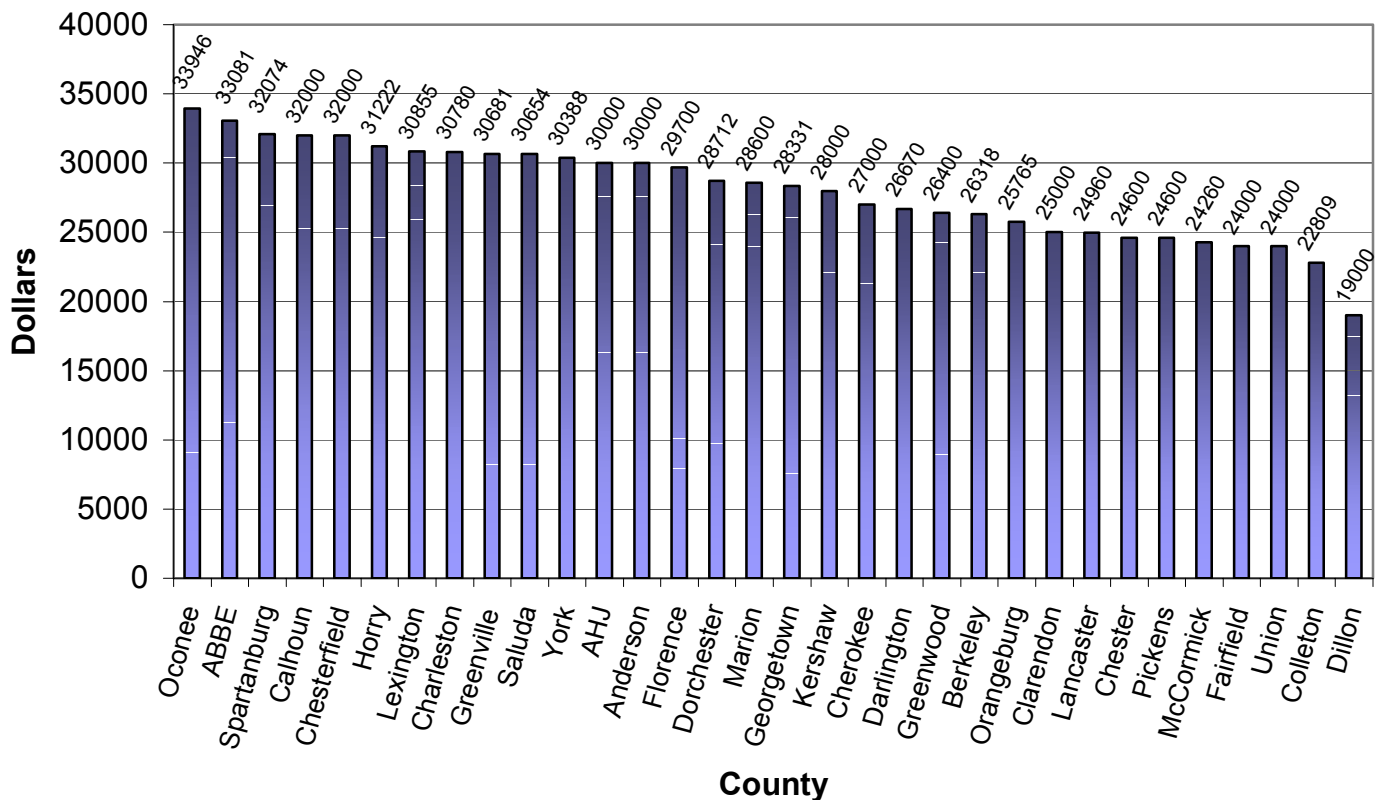


6. **Starting salary** for beginning MLS librarians.

Average (Mean) = \$28,012.69; Median (middle value) \$28,171.84

South Carolina Public Library Starting MLS Annual Salaries

Counties not included either did not respond or salaries are negotiable



NOTE: To compare with teacher salaries, please visit "Minimum Salary Schedule" for teachers at <http://www.myscschools.com/offices/finance/02ss-cc.xls> which is accessible from the MySCSchools.com website - <http://www.myscschools.com/tracks/educators/pay.htm>

7. **The following are responses from those who completed the survey regarding problems/issues/concerns about staffing & retirement issues.**

- Funding
- We have had great difficulty in recruitment of MLS librarians and have lost several professional positions due to inability to fill them. Some have been open more than a year before we downgraded them to support staff positions just to get someone in and retain the position. I attribute this to the national shortage of librarians and the relatively low salaries in our field. I feel that our salary ranges

are competitive for the state but not for the nation, and certainly not for the private/corporate sector. That is where the real problem lies: trained librarians working in other fields as information scientists and pricing us out of the market. I can't blame them and have considered leaving the field for financial reasons myself. I know that my salary, with two master's degrees and 28 years in the field, is lower than several other county department heads with much less education and experience. Our County has just completed a major reclassification project but we have not yet been notified of the results. We are hoping this may address some of the inequities locally but we realize we are in an extremely fortunate minority of library staffs who have been given this consideration. Until salaries and benefits are addressed, I feel we will continue to face this problem in South Carolina. In addition, we have had a great deal of turnover in our lower non-professional positions (Clerk/Shelver and Library Technical Assistant I). I have hired over 30 in 3 Clerk/Shelver positions in the past 6 years! We find that we bring folks in, give them tons of computer training, only to lose them to other County departments or private/corporate sector positions that pay more due to the very computer experience they have gained through us! Again, I also attribute this to low salaries. When some retail outlets (McDonalds, Sears) offer \$1,000 hire-on bonuses, how can we possibly compete? Last, we are finding that some of the folks we do hire into these positions do not have the education and basic skills necessary to do the work, even in these entry-level positions. We have had several employees that simply could not alphabetize or spell, and could not learn to do so within six weeks of hire, despite having worked in other capacities for years. One in particular that came to mind was both a Teaching Assistant and a School Media Assistant in our state yet couldn't alphabetize or spell sufficiently to work in the library. We simply do not have a large-enough educated, qualified local work force to perform even our most basic tasks. Folks who do have the education and skills required, again, get higher paying jobs in other County departments or the private/corporate sector. We have been fortunate to have a core, loyal staff who came to us years ago and remain out of dedication and love of the work. Once staff move up beyond Library Assistant I positions, they do tend to stay with us for many years, again suggesting that our entry-level salaries are a major portion of the problem ...

- Can't find qualified children's librarians or catalogers (MLS)
- If Salaries do not increase for the branch librarians there will be many retirements and few qualified people to replace them. Why is it that service oriented positions in libraries that require some advance education receive the smallest salaries of any professional field. SALARIES MUST BE INCREASED FOR ALL LIBRARIANS REGARDLESS OF POSITION.
- Recent graduates without practical experience. Can't compete salary-wise with other professions. Public libraries cannot compete with schools salary-wise.
- There are not enough MLS candidates to fill existing positions now – five years from now the situation will be critical. The pay isn't good enough to attract people to the profession. I think it would help to have a recruiter and some scholarships to entice new people.
- The problem is that small libraries have the same MLS needs as larger libraries, but smaller libraries don't have the resources to pay the salaries to employ the graduates with degrees.

- Hiring good staff depends on providing competitive salaries. Unfortunately, we have no statewide public library (annually maintained) database for profession/non-professional staff [salaries]. Such a database would serve as a tool to leverage local government to provide funds for public library staffing. Historically, it has been judged to be too hard to do?
- Badly need updated salary scale from State Library - even though many counties are tied in to their county salary scales, it's still useful to have profession-specific information. Should include ranges for paraprofessionals as well.
- Great concern over finding MLS degree librarians to work at the library.
- It is very difficult to get folks to work in rural libraries, particularly if adjoining counties have higher pay scales.
- Impact of TERI
- Salaries are too low to compete with school system, county, etc. – lack of professional librarians.
- Our County is undergoing a staffing study done by an outside source, MGT. I have heard nothing regarding any of their results at this time.
- Our low salary.
- Salaries for rural areas aren't high enough to attract applicants.
- There is only one MLS librarian. That person is the director.

Survey results compiled by:
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